

Message Text

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70/65

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 OMB-01 SAM-01 SAB-01

ACDA-05 IO-11 A-01 OPR-02 SY-05 OC-05 CCO-00 SCCT-01

/096 W

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O 131135Z MAR 76

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8997

INFO AMEMBASSY ATHENS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 2273

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (PARA 2)

DELIVER TO NEA/ARN/DRAPER AT OPENING OF BUSINESS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PINT, LE

SUBJ: 0900 LEBANON REPORT

1. SITUATION LOOKS CONSIDERABLY BETTER TODAY FOR
LEBANESE UNITY ALTHOUGH WE ARE STILL NOT OUT OF THE
WOODS. ALL MAJOR POLITICAL AND MILITARY ELEMENTS IN
THE COUNTRY HAVE AGREED ON DEPARTURE OR REMOVAL OF
FRANGIE PROVIDED THIS CAN BE DONE PRESERVING LEGALITY.

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IT WAS INTERESTING THAT ELEMENTS AS FAR RIGHT AS

DEFENDERS OF THE CEDAR, AND MARONITE "ORGANIZATION"
AGREE WITH LEFTIST LEBANESE ARAB ARMY AND EVEN
PALESTINIAN REJECTIONISTS THAT LEGALITY MUST BE
PRESERVED. FEAR OF A REAL MILITARY COUP
SUPPLANTING CHECKS AND BALANCES OF TRADITIONAL
LEBANESE DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM SEEMS TO BE SHARED
AMONG RIGHT AND LEFT.

2. PROBLEM IS FRANGIE SHOW EVERY SIGN OF HIS USUAL
STUBBORNNESS AND IS BACKED BY SOME LOYALIST CHRISTIAN
ARMY TROOPS IN BAABDA AND ZGHORTA FIGHTERS. HE
APPARENTLY STILL HAS CONCENTRATION OF SUCH FORCES
LOYAL TO HIM IN AMCHIT AREA NORTH OF BYBLOS WHERE
LEBANESE POWERFUL SHORT WAVE RADIO STATION IS LOCATED
AND REMAINS UNDER FRANGIE CONTROL. IN BEIRUT
INDICATIONS ARE DISPARATE ELEMENTS SUCH AS LEBANESE
ARMY HIGH COMMAND, FOLLOWERS OF COUP LEADER GEN,
AHDAB, AND EVEN FOLLOWERS OF LT. KHATIB (WHO
MAY BE HERE AFTER RETURNING FROM DAMASCUS) ALL
SEEM TO BE CONCERTING SUPPORT BEHIND MOSLEM AND
CHRISTIAN LEADERS WHO ARE MEETING THIS MORNING IN
PARLIAMENT TO DECIDE ON MOST EFFECTIVE APPROACH FOR
REMOVAL OF PRESIDENT. THIS SEEMS TO BE ONE THING
OVERLOOKED IN LEBANESE CONSTITUTIONAL PROCESS. WHILE
TWO THIRDS OF CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES CAN VOTE AMENDMENT
TO CONSTITUTION WHICH COULD PRESUMABLY REMOVE FRANGIE
AGAINST HIS OWN WILL, SUCH AN ACT MUST BE SIGNED BY
THE PRESIDENT AND IT IS QUESTIONABLE WHETHER LEBANESE
ADHERENCE TO LEGALITY WOULD PERMIT INTERPRETATION THAT
A SUCCESSOR PRESIDENT COULD SIGN INSTEAD OF FRANGIE. I
SUSPECT THERE WILL BE CONSIDERABLE NEGOTIATION AHEAD.

3. MAIN DANGER RESULTS FROM FACT THAT TEMPORARY RIGHT/
LEFT ALLIANCE BEHIND EFFORTS TO OUST FRANGIE MAY
FALL APART IF MOMENTUM IS LOST AND NEW PRESIDENT
IS NOT ELECTED WHO COULD HELP WELD IT INTO MORE PERMANENT
RELATIONSHIP. VARIETY OF LEFT WING FORCES WITH ASSIST-
ANCE FROM LEBANESE ARAB ARMY COMMAND OF MAJOR MAMARY
IN TRIPOLI FOUGHT SUBSTANTIAL BATTLE AGAINST ZGHORTA
FORCES LAST NIGHT WHICH INCLUDED SOME HEAVY ARMS.
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WHILE THIS TURNED BACK ZGHORTA FORCES THE ATTITUDE OF
PHALANGE AND CHAMOUN FORCES IS SUFFICIENTLY VAGUE TO
PERMIT DEGRADATION OF THE SITUATION INTO ANOTHER CHRIST-
IAN-MOSLEM CLASH WHICH WOULD REDOUND TO FRANGIE'S
BENEFIT. WHILE SYRIAN MEMBERS OF MIXED MILITARY
COMMITTEES RETURNED YESTERDAY TO THE COUNTRY (TOP REP-
RESENTATIVE MEDANI APPARENTLY NEVER HAVING LEFT),
SYRIAN CONTROLLED FORCES HERE ARE GENERALLY PLAYING

NEUTRAL ROLE EXCEPT FOR SAIQA WHICH SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN LAST NIGHT'S BATTLE NEAR TRIPOLI AND ACTIVE ELSEWHERE FROM TIME TO TIME.

4. APART FROM CONTINUING SNIPER EXCHANGES IN HOTEL DISTRICT AND KANTARI AREA WHICH CLAIMED AT LEAST HALF A DOZEN KILLED YESTERDAY AND MORE WOUNDED, SITUATION IN BEIRUT ON PROPHET'S BIRTHDAY IS CALM. SAIQA-PLA PERMITTING NORMAL ACCESS TO THE AIRPORT, ALTHOUGH LOCAL DEFENSE FORCES OF VARIOUS KINDS ARE OUT ON ROAD BLOCKS THROUGHOUT AT LEAST WESTERN (MOSLEM) SECTOR OF THE CITY. FOR THE MOMENT EMBASSY REMAINS SECURE AND FREE PASSAGE CONTINUES THROUGH ALL THESE ROAD BLOCKS FOR FOREIGNERS AND NON-MARONITES, DESPITE RUMOR THAT EMBASSY NEIGHBORHOOD OF AIN MREISSE IS NOW COMING UNDER COMMAND OF KHATIB'S LEBANESE ARAB ARMY.

5. BEST CHANCES OF LEBANESE STABILITY CLEARLY LIE IN REINTEGRATION OF LEBANESE ARAB ARMY FORCES UNDER KHATIB AND MAMARY WITH LOYALIST FORCES STILL GIVING ALLEGIANCE TO ARMY HIGH COMMAND AND GEN. AHDAB. REINTEGRATION OF CHRISTIAN ARMY UNITS WHICH FLED MOSLEM AREAS WOULD BE NEXT STEP. ENTIRE PROCESS WOULD BE GREATLY FACILITATED BY EARLY DEPARTURE OF FRANGIE AND ELECTION OF NEW PRESIDENT COMMITTED TO UNIFYING MOSLEMS AND CHRISTIANS, RIGHT AND LEFT. LAMBRAKIS

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